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Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Letter dated 26 May 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With the agreement of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I have the honour to transmit the text of the attached resolutions adopted at the 101st Inter-Parliamentary Conference, which was held in Brussels from 10 to 16 April 1999 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of those resolutions circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 28.

(*Signed*) André **Adam**
Permanent Representative of Belgium to
the United Nations

* A/54/50.

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

101st CONFERENCE OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

The 101st Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union* was held in Brussels (Belgium) from 10 to 16 April 1999, at the invitation of the Belgian Parliament. The Conference brought together 647 members of Parliament from 125 countries and the representatives of 27 observer delegations.

In the course of its proceedings, the Conference adopted the attached resolutions.

*** The Inter-Parliamentary Union's membership was as follows as at 16 April 1999:**

Members (138)

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger*, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Associate Members

Andean Parliament, Central American Parliament, European Parliament, Latin American Parliament, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

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* Following the recent coup d'Etat in Niger, the Council decided at its sitting of 16 April to follow developments in that country closely and revert to the question at the 165th session in Berlin with a view to taking a final decision on the possible suspension of the affiliation of the Parliament of this country to the Union.

PARLIAMENTARY ACTION TO ENCOURAGE ALL COUNTRIES TO SIGN AND RATIFY THE COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY PROHIBITING ALL NUCLEAR TESTING, TO ENCOURAGE UNIVERSAL AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION MEASURES AND TO WORK TOWARDS THE EVENTUAL ELIMINATION OF ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Resolution adopted without a vote* by the 101st Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Brussels, 15 April 1999)

The 101st Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

Determined to contribute to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects and to the process of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, with a view to strengthening international peace and security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recognising the key role of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in achieving the above objectives, and *appreciating* the extension of the Treaty in 1995 for an indefinite period of time,

Underscoring the gravity of nuclear tests and their harmful effects on the natural environment,

Stressing the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) adopted by the United Nations and opened for signature on 24 September 1996,

Emphasising the need to reach agreement on banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices,

Recalling the most recent resolutions of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, in particular those adopted by the 94th (Bucharest, 1995), 91st (Paris, 1994) and 89th (New Delhi, 1993) Inter-Parliamentary Conferences,

Convinced of the imperative need to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction,

Guided by a sense of responsibility towards the fate of humanity,

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* The delegation of India opposed the resolution.

A. Nuclear Non-Proliferation

1. *Urges* all States which have not yet done so to sign and become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT);

2. *Appeals* to the States parties to the NPT to implement fully the decision of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament;

3. *Urges* universal application of the comprehensive nuclear safeguards administered by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and adherence to the 1997 Additional Protocol strengthening the existing safeguards;

4. *Calls* for the strengthening of controls in order to prevent transfers of nuclear weapon-usable material and equipment, while promoting international co-operation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by the States parties to the NPT;

B. Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty

5. *Calls* for the cessation of all nuclear-weapon tests and for the signature and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTPT) by all States;

6. *Calls on* governments of the ratifying States to request the UN Secretary-General to convene a conference, prior to the 2000 NPT Review Conference, in accordance with Article XIV(2) of the CTBT, in order "... to facilitate the early entry into force of the Treaty";

7. *Considers* that it is important to reach an agreement on the closure and abolition of all nuclear test sites;

C. "Cut-Off" Treaty

8. *Calls* for the commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices ("cut-off" treaty), on the basis of the report of the Special Co-ordinator of the Conference on Disarmament and the mandate contained therein;

D. Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones

9. *Welcomes* the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world as an important step in achieving the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world;

10. *Supports* the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America, the South Pacific, Africa and South-East Asia;

11. *Calls* for the completion of the negotiations for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia;

12. *Also calls* for the elimination of nuclear weapons and for negotiations with a view to establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East;

13. *Further calls* for negotiations with a view to establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe;

14. *Lastly calls* for negotiations with a view to establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world where no such zones exist;

15. *Calls on* all countries possessing nuclear weapons to respect the status of nuclear-weapon-free zones;

E. Non-Proliferation of Missiles

16. *Calls* for the strengthening of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) through an international non-discriminatory and transparent framework in order to reduce the danger of proliferation of missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction;

F. Nuclear Disarmament

17. *Urges* the acceleration of the nuclear disarmament process, as required by Article VI of the NPT, the decisions of the NPT Review and Extension Conference, and the 1996 Opinion of the International Court of Justice;

18. *Acknowledges* the efforts made by the Russian Federation and the United States of America, within the framework of the START I and START II Treaties, to achieve drastic reductions of their nuclear arsenals; *appeals* to the Russian side to ratify the START II Treaty, and *also appeals* to both sides to begin negotiations shortly on a START III treaty;

19. *Calls* for negotiations on the reduction and eventual elimination of tactical nuclear weapons;

20. *Welcomes* the ongoing dismantlement of nuclear weapons, and *notes* the importance of the safe and effective management of the extracted fissile materials;

21. *Supports* the efforts to set up a forum within the Conference on Disarmament to identify and consider nuclear disarmament measures for multilateral negotiation;

22. *Calls* for the renunciation of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

THE PROBLEM OF METROPOLITAN AREAS: A GLOBAL CHALLENGE TO WHICH PARLIAMENTARIANS MUST RESPOND IN TERMS OF URBAN CIVILISATION AND DEMOCRACY

Resolution adopted without a vote by the 101st Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Brussels, 15 April 1999)

The 101st Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

• *Aware* that due to the mushrooming of cities and the steady pace of population growth, half of the world's population will be living in urban areas by the start of the third millennium,

Mindful that cities are a driving force behind the overall economic and social progress of nations and that as society has evolved, urbanisation has made it possible to improve the quality of life of a large proportion of the population by facilitating access to education, social services and health care for all citizens, especially children, as well as participation in cultural, political and religious life,

Convinced that the potential for progress of metropolitan areas can be exploited fully only if lasting solutions are found to the serious problems caused by the concentration of population and activities specific to large cities, the most significant of which are:

- the shortage of housing and the inadequate nature of some existing housing;
- environmental pollution in and around urban areas;
- the lack or shortage of water resources or water-treatment facilities;
- the deterioration of the building stock and the architectural heritage;
- the inadequacy of infrastructures;
- the high unemployment rate;
- the insufficiency of basic social services, particularly child care and care for the elderly, and of access to education and health care for all citizens, especially children;
- traffic congestion;
- problems linked to the ageing population;
- food insecurity;
- inadequate financial resources for local authorities to meet their obligations;
- the rising crime rate;
- prostitution, the sexual exploitation of children and drug abuse;
- heightened vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters;

Disturbed by:

- the insufficient participation of women in political decision-making, particularly in local government, which means that decisions are taken without reference to women's needs,

- the fact that employed women are still frequently relegated to inferior jobs and are not paid equitably, that many women face harassment in the workplace, and that economic restructuring has had a profound impact on women's employment in many countries,
- the knowledge that women still carry most of the burden of housekeeping and family care, whereas social programmes are not adapted to the dual role of women as wage earners and home-makers,
- the barriers faced by unemployed women, including lack of education and training, discrimination in hiring practices, and lack of access to credit to start up their own businesses,

Deeply concerned that all these problems primarily affect the poor and vulnerable social groups (the elderly, women, children, people with disabilities) while posing an ongoing threat to the lives of all inhabitants of large cities, regardless of their social category,

Aware that the developing countries, where most large cities on the planet are located, are the first to suffer from the negative effects of urbanisation, the cause of which is rural exodus rather than population growth rates, but *mindful* that the developed countries also face major, albeit different, problems linked to megacities,

Concerned that the faster pace of the "urbanisation" of poverty and the ever growing gap between rich and poor in large cities jeopardise solidarity, accentuate the danger that part of the urban population will become alienated and marginalised, resulting in social segregation,

Preoccupied by the increase, in recent years, of conflicts and wars which have led and are leading to the destruction of the housing and settlements of millions of people throughout the world,

Recalling the support which the Inter-Parliamentary Union has given to the follow up of the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992), the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, September 1994), the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, March 1995), the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, September 1995), and the World Food Summit (Rome, November 1996),

Recalling especially the contribution of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to the preparation of the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Istanbul, June 1996), which addressed the problems of human settlements in general and large cities in particular, and the Union's action to promote the implementation, at national and international level, of the commitments and decisions adopted at that Conference,

Recalling also that the resolution entitled "Parliamentary Support to the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)", adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Council at its 158th session (Istanbul, 20 April 1996), especially operative paragraph 4, points out that many human settlement problems will require legislative action and that the participation of national parliaments and their members in the implementation of the Habitat II commitments will therefore be vitally important;

Expressing appreciation for the activities of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements carried out in co-operation with its partners in the UN system, with a view to promoting urban areas which are more productive, more equitable and more sustainable, in the spirit of the Habitat Agenda,

1. *Urges* national parliaments to:

(a) promote full awareness of the positive role that cities play in the world as a source of social, economic, cultural and political development and, hence, of their importance to the sustainable overall development of human society;

(b) contribute, through appropriate legislative measures, to strengthening the institutional and financial capacity of governments to put into practice the commitments of the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and to monitor the way in which these commitments are applied at the national level;

(c) when dealing with food insecurity, support the FAO Special Programme for Food Security which, *inter alia*, focuses on urban and peri-urban food production problems and addresses the bottlenecks associated with food supply and distribution systems;

(d) adopt, improve and supplement national legislation to create conditions conducive to sustainable urban development, by undertaking in particular to:

- meet the need, in both the industrial and developing countries, to strengthen local self-administration, the systematic application of the principle of subsidiarity and the decentralisation of responsibility together with the corresponding financial and personnel resources of local authorities, and to promote greater participation by the people;
- encourage the national private sector to invest and become involved in solving the problems of large cities, and to participate in a priority basis in urgent activities, such as the construction and improvement of housing and infrastructure, the management of household and industrial waste, the provision of adequate good-quality water, job creation, the delivery of basic services, etc.;
- create a favourable and stable climate for foreign investment, especially in the developing countries, based on a balanced complementarity between the rural world and cities;
- reinforce legislative measures to prevent and curb crime, prostitution, sexual exploitation of children and drug abuse, all of which are problems associated with urban areas;
- ensure a healthy environment in and around large cities by preventing activities harmful to the environment, supporting public bodies and associations involved in the protection of the environment, and increasing financial and technical resources for the preservation of the environment;
- promote measures for the conservation and restoration of the architectural heritage of cities, so as to preserve their identity and safeguard the spiritual and cultural particularities of each people;
- revitalise urban social services, especially health care and education;

(e) allocate to all levels of government, including local authorities, the budgetary resources needed for sustainable urban development;

(f) adopt the necessary legislative measures and allocate the necessary budgetary resources for the economic, social and cultural progress of rural areas, thereby helping to narrow the gap between cities and villages, balance rural-urban migration and thus prevent the overpopulation of large cities;

(g) take into consideration, in the legislative process, women's role in and contribution to the life of large cities, and the need to promote real partnership between men and women in the framing and implementation of urban development policies, by seeing to it that the principle of equal opportunity is applied; and recognise the particular needs of urban women by:

- taking steps to increase the number of women involved in political decision-making and particularly in local government, whether as observers or as elected officials;
- enacting specific legislation to encourage equality, end discrimination against women and in particular ensure equal pay for equal work;
- changing laws and business practices that discriminate against women, including laws on inheritance, land tenure and housing allocation;
- ensuring that credit is available to women, whether through dedicated funds or through the private sector;
- addressing the safety and security of urban women, both in the design of cities and in the provision of safe havens for women who are victims of violence;

(h) create or improve the legal framework for the protection of all underprivileged and vulnerable social groups living in large cities, *inter alia* by:

- preventing them from falling foul of discrimination or marginalisation;
- facilitating their access to decent housing, employment, education, health care, basic social services, infrastructures, etc.;
- encouraging them to participate actively in the framing of urban development policies;

(i) contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to the development of co-operation between States, their urban players and the competent regional and world bodies, with a view to achieving the goals of the Habitat Agenda as soon as possible;

(j) encourage the strengthening of technical and financial assistance to benefit large cities in developing countries;

2. *Calls on* parliamentarians to:

(a) see to the systematic application of the principles of good governance, in order to ensure the transparency, accountability, effectiveness and participatory nature of the management and administration of large cities, as prerequisites for their sustainable development;

(b) facilitate contacts and dialogue between citizens, local authorities and competent national bodies, with a view to solving the difficulties faced by urban communities;

(c) promote partnerships involving all committed and concerned players - private sector, local authorities, civil society, including NGOs, government, and also regional and international organisations - in the framing and implementation of sustainable development strategies of large cities;

(d) encourage exchanges of information, experience and know-how between local authorities at national and international level;

(e) promote the introduction of national and local systems for the collection, processing and utilisation of data pertaining to urban conditions and trends, as a basis for coherent strategies and programmes for the sustainable development of large cities;

(f) commit themselves to sustainable development in urban areas by encouraging sustainable patterns of production, consumption, transportation and settlement; pollution prevention; respect for the carrying capacity of ecosystems; and the preservation of opportunities for future generations;

3. *Urges* the industrialised nations to endeavour to allocate 0.7% of their GNP to development aid, as recommended by the United Nations and endorsed in the Brasilia Plan of Action adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union; and *invites* international financial institutions, the private sector and bilateral and multilateral aid organisations to contribute additional resources to consolidate national efforts to solve the problems of big cities;

4. *Urges* national parliaments and parliamentarians to use all the mechanisms of parliamentary diplomacy to promote peace and stability, to eliminate hotbeds of conflict and to put a speedy end to current conflicts, thereby reducing the risk of loss of human life, the obliteration of historical and cultural values, and the deterioration of the environment and the architectural heritage in urban centres;

5. *Recommends* that the Inter-Parliamentary Union and national parliaments support the activities of the UN Centre for Human Settlements and contribute more to the activities and programmes of the United Nations and its bodies operating in the field of sustainable development.

WRITING OFF THE GOVERNMENT DEBT OF HEAVILY INDEBTED POOR COUNTRIES (HIPCs)

Resolution adopted without a vote by the 101st Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Brussels, 15 April 1999)

The 101st Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

Acknowledging and *appreciating* the HIPC initiative launched by major donor countries, through the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to provide debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries,

Concerned at the slow and limited implementation of the initiative,

Deeply concerned that several poor countries cannot service their foreign debts,

Deeply concerned also that the burden of debt inhibits and in some cases totally prevents economic growth and the delivery of vital socio-economic services in these countries,

Aware that the stranglehold of poverty is a source of instability and conflict within countries and regions, making world peace difficult to attain,

Distressed at the abject poverty and deprivation of many communities and the impact this has on the lives of their members, in particular the most vulnerable (women, children and the elderly),

Aware that in many cases the debt burden of poor countries has been inherited from historical conditions of colonialism and foreign domination, and *further aware* of the problem of corruption existing in some debtor and creditor countries,

Recognising the urgency of the issue, as evidenced by the high-level attention currently being devoted to the problem of HIPCs by donor governments, parliaments, multilateral institutions and citizens groups world-wide,

Welcoming the efforts of debtor countries, despite the short-term social impact often involved, to pursue economic reform, stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes,

Recalling the relevant provisions of past IPU resolutions, notably the resolution on the "Need for a radical solution to the problem of debt in the developing world", adopted in Stockholm in September 1992, and the resolution on "Foreign debt as a factor limiting the integration of the Third World countries into the process of globalisation", adopted in Windhoek in April 1998,

1. *Urges* the creditor countries to commit themselves in principle to writing off the public debt of HIPCs in the shortest possible time;

2. *Calls on* both creditor and debtor nations to convene a meeting of heads of government for the purpose of accelerating debt forgiveness;

3. *Recommends* that the eligibility criteria for debt relief under the HIPC initiative be broadened to include other poor or vulnerable countries facing unsustainable debt burdens;

4. *Urges* debtor countries to perform in accordance with good governance, introducing transparent and accountable mechanisms of control in order to ensure that the benefits of debt relief result in the socio-economic development of their peoples;

5. *Recommends* that debt relief should be achieved without jeopardising the economies of other nations or the stability of the world's financial markets;

6. *Requests* the IPU Secretary General to transmit this resolution to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and to explore with them possibilities for future co-operation;

7. *Urges* the IPU Committee for Sustainable Development to monitor the follow-up of the present resolution and to report yearly to the Inter-Parliamentary Council